45.5

Segregation on Sunday?

Special Issue

SOCIAL PROGRESS · JANUARY, 1955

Social Progress

Published by the Department of Social Education and Action of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., to provide a forum for the Church on subjects of social concern for Christians. It includes program resources, legislative developments, and guides to worship, study, and action for leaders of social action groups in local churches, presbyteries, synods, presbyterial and synodical societies. Articles represent the opinions of the authors—not the official policy of the Department of Social Education and Action or of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Vol. XLV, No. 5

JANUARY, 1955

Special Race Relations Issue

PAGE

Foreword 1
Assumptions and Limitations 2
Five Churches That Didn't Run
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Detroit, Mich.,
by H. B. Sissel 3
A Postscript, *by Malcolm B. Sylvester* 17
West Cincinnati-St. Barnabas Church, Cincinnati, Ohio
by Maurice F. McCrackin 18
Bidwell Street Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.
by Virgil P. Moccia 26
Fort Schuyler Presbyterian Church, Bronx, N. Y.
by Howard M. Weaving 27
First Presbyterian Church, Mount Vernon, N. Y.
by Melvin J. Joachim 30
People Keep Asking— 33
How to Proceed 40
By What Power? *by Frank T. Wilson* 46

Department of Social Education and Action: Clifford Earle, Secretary and Editor; Margaret E. Kuhn, Associate Secretary and Editor; H. B. Sissel, Associate Secretary; Marshal L. Scott, Industrial Relations Consultant; Helen H. Harder, Editorial Assistant; Helen Lineweaver, Director of Washington Office.

Published monthly, except July and August, by the Department of Social Education and Action of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, at 1009 Sloan St., Crawfordsville, Indiana. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Crawfordsville, Indiana, under the act of March 3, 1879.

Editorial and Executive office, 830 Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

Subscriptions, $1.00 a year; three years for $2.50. Single copy, 15 cents. Group rates on request. Send subscriptions to 830 Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

Copyright, 1954, by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Foreword

EARLY in 1952 the Department of Social Education and Action published *Everyone Welcome*, a handbook on racial and cultural relations for use in the local church.

Everyone Welcome was intended both as a reading pamphlet for church leaders and as a study guide for adult groups in the churches. It dealt with the Church's broad responsibilities for promoting Christian brotherhood among children, youth, and adults in planning its programs, in dealing with its employees, and in its relations with the community. It did not and could not at that time spell out rather carefully some of the specific steps by which a particular church can desegregate itself, become inclusive, and achieve a truly integrated Christian fellowship. Data are now available, however, from the experience of many integrated churches and from studies made by other disciplines which provide guidance and encouragement to pastors and church leaders who wish to see their congregations enjoy full and open fellowship. On the basis of these data this issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS can be quite specific in the rather narrow but crucially important field of methods of integrating the local church. *Everyone Welcome* remains the important background text.

It is hoped that this issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS will help to bridge the gap, at the local church level, between our practice and our pronouncements for "a nonsegregated church and a nonsegregated society."

—EUGENE CARSON BLAKE, *Stated Clerk, General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.*

—PAUL CALVIN PAYNE, *General Secretary, Presbyterian Board of Christian Education*

Assumptions and Limitations

This issue of Social Progress is devoted exclusively to one aspect of the task of building "a nonsegregated church and a nonsegregated society." It is addressed to the whole Church, but more especially to those hundreds of churches now situated, or potentially situated, in racially and culturally mixed communities. Specifically, it is addressed to the pastors of these churches, not as an exhortation, but as a word of counsel and encouragement, because theirs is a key role.

The editors make some assumptions and admit to a number of limitations. It is assumed that the task of desegregating our churches is a common task shared by all the racial and cultural groups within our denomination, but that the opportunities for action, the perspective from which the "problem" of segregation is viewed, and the approaches to solution will vary with the background of the congregation. For example, the opportunities for integrating Negro Christians into a "white" church are not the same as the opportunities for integrating white Christians into a "Negro" church.

It does not lie within the choice of the average Negro (and to a lesser degree, Oriental, Indian, Puerto Rican, or Mexican) member or pastor to alter this situation. The door to open, unsegregated fellowship does not, in most cases, have a handle on his "side." The greater effort to open that door must come from the "other" side and be initiated by the white Christian. Of course, it remains for the minority person to enter when the door is sincerely opened.

Those of us who are nonwhite Christians and those of us who are white share a mutual responsibility to correct the racial and cultural barriers artifically set up within the body of Christ, his Church. It is *our* problem. But those of us who are white have avenues of action open to us which are denied, by sin, to those of us who are colored. This issue of Social Progress thus inevitably takes on the characteristics of "a letter to white Christians," with all the inherent limitations of such an emphasis.

Finally, a further limitation should be noted. All the narratives of integration related herein involve primarily Negro and white Christians, not because these are numerically the most prominent groups (although they are), but because the data at hand as this is written are far more adequate and complete in this area. It is hoped, however, that this study will be useful in all efforts to bring about racial and cultural unity at the level of the local church. It will be most helpful when used in conjunction with *Everyone Welcome*, which shows quite clearly that the task of desegregation is much broader than this monograph indicates. The Church is only one key locus of the cancer which extends into the areas of housing, job opportunity, financial policy, education, etc. But the local church *is* a key area.

—*Clifford Earle, Margaret Kuhn, H. B. Sissel*

Five Churches That Didn't Run

" . . . our fears were groundless"

Racially and/or culturally inclusive Presbyterian churches in America include those of nearly every type, size, and location—urban, rural, and industrial; large, medium, and small; East, West, North, and South. Integrated churches, possessing a quality both deeper and broader than mere inclusiveness, are fewer and less representative. Nevertheless, they are far from rare or unique.

The narratives and extended comments below describe five integrated churches quite different from each other in type, size, and location. Such accounts of rich experiences of integrated fellowship could be multiplied if space permitted. However, the task of desegregating the local church continues to be a pioneering venture.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

Detroit, Michigan

By **H. B. SISSEL,** *Associate Secretary, Department of Social Education and Action, Board of Christian Education*

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH was built in 1925 at the corner of Twelfth and Glendale in Detroit in what was then the edge of the residence district of the City of Detroit. From 1925 until 1945 the same pastor served the church. From 1945 until the spring of 1948 a young ex-Navy chaplain served as its pastor. From August 1, 1949, until September 15, 1953, St. Andrew's Church was served by the writer who narrates this account.

By 1949, St. Andrew's Church was in a situation roughly described by the following factors: The residential district of Detroit itself had extended north and west five and eight miles beyond the location of the church, which was situated just outside the ring circumscribing the "inner city" area of Detroit.

Before the influx of Negro residents took place, the residents of the immediate community surrounding the church were for the most part skilled and unskilled laborers working in the various plants and factories in Detroit. There was a sprinkling of white collar workers, junior executives, clerks, nurses, teachers, etc., mostly from the middle-middle class. A quarter of a mile to the west of the church was a

large Jewish community with some of its members residing in the immediate parish around the church. Two blocks north of the church was a large Finnish Lutheran church and nearby a smaller Finnish Lutheran church, an offshoot of the former. These churches served a small Finnish community surrounding them.

The membership of St. Andrew's Church until about 1945 was drawn largely from the neighborhood immediately surrounding the church, and the economic and cultural level of its membership corresponded rather closely with the residents of the community, with the exception of one physician, a fairly well-to-do insurance executive, one dentist, and one architect.

As the homes in that area began to age and therefore became less desirable to white home buyers, purchasing opportunities were simultaneously opening up for them in the surrounding suburbs. Those bidding for homes in the community surrounding the church were more and more restricted to Negroes, and probably around 1945 or 1946 the first Negroes began to buy homes two blocks to the east of the church, six or eight blocks to the north of it, and approximately a mile to the south of it. Gradually, from 1945 through 1949 the boundaries between these Negro areas and the previously white areas began to become blurred, with individual Negro purchasers finding homes within previously all-white blocks in the immediate vicinity of the church.

In 1949 the church itself had a "book" membership of 460. The average attendance at morning services was 175 to 200, going below that figure in the summer and above it on special occasions, such as Mother's Day. It was obvious to the session, and later to the pastor, that the figure 460 did not correspond realistically to the actual participant membership of the church, and it was subsequently pared regularly.

When I met with the session of the church, prior to accepting the call to its pastorate, I was not aware that the community, and, in fact, the church membership itself, was extremely unstable and likely to become more so because of the racial change in the neighborhood. However, in the preliminary interview with the session and the pulpit committee I did ask them if they thought they and the church members would be willing to depart from some of the traditional molds into which so many of the churches have been pressed, so long as the great anchors of the faith and the essentials of the gospel were held fast. In asking this question I had nothing definite in mind. I was simply trying to prevent the eventuality of being bound into an artificial pattern. The session, without realizing what it was saying, unanimously stated that it and the congregation would be most cordial

toward "new" ideas and ways of doing things.

It was disturbing to a new pastor, fresh out of seminary, to discover that the faith and life of his congregation were not transformed every week by his sermons. Indeed so immersed was he in the task of adjusting himself to the routine of the parish, getting to know his people, and accepting the reality that his preaching was not going to bring about any immediate radical changes in their lives, that it was a matter of some weeks before the awareness came of what was happening in the neighborhood.

Two or three obvious factors, however, soon made the handwriting on the wall apparent. In the neighborhood itself "For Sale" signs were springing up like mushrooms, as white residents, sensing what they considered to be a threat to their economic and social well-being, sought to run away. Increasing absences were noted on the part of those members who had moved away and who (seized with a vague and undefined pessimism as to the ultimate fate of the church) refused to drive the distance necessary to attend church on Sunday. In pastoral calling the repeated emergence of vague fears and hostilities toward the new residents of the neighborhood were sure indications of the internal and external instability of the church and the community.

As pastor of the church I could hardly ignore all these indications of an extremely unfruitful future for the church and for the community if the church persisted in its traditional pattern of ministry only to "our kind" of people. It therefore became a matter, not only of observing the ethical implications of the gospel and the evangelistic responsibilities of any Christian pastor, but also a matter of self-interest and preservation for the church itself which necessitated the making of a decision. That decision was made within myself, namely, that so long as I was its pastor, St. Andrew's would stay put—ministering in the local community wherever the opportunity presented itself. Later, when I had had time to reflect upon the situation I came to view it not as a problem but as a God-given opportunity, denied to most churches, to make a positive witness in the healing of one of the open sores that afflict the Christian Church and Western society—segregation.

From that point on, my ministry had a singleness of purpose which gave the varied and diversified activities common to every pastor a unity and cohesiveness which they would not otherwise have had. As I repeatedly encountered instances of prejudice, fear, and hostility in pastoral counseling and group leadership, it became obvious that my own preparation was in-

sufficient. I therefore made it a point to read as much literature as possible to increase my understanding of intergroup relations, the dynamics of prejudice, the problems of minority groups, etc. I further tried to seize every opportunity, in fact to make opportunities, to form friendships and associations across racial lines. More and more I searched the Bible for any indications of the Scriptural grounds for regarding all Christians as brothers in Christ and all men as brothers by virtue of their common sinfulness and need for salvation. Particularly, I had to do some clear thinking and searching out of the facts in such areas as interracial marriage, the effects of Negro purchases upon real estate values, the stand of our denomination on the subject of segregation.

Only one sermon was preached specifically on the subject of the individual Christian's (and the Church's) responsibility in the area of "race relations." I am not sure that it was wise to preach a sermon on this specific subject within the immediate context of the church's situation, but I endeavored to make it as objective as possible, simply stating the clear implications of the gospel, the facts of history, and the contemporary situation both locally and world-wide. No personal negative reactions to this sermon were expressed, although there may have been several that were not stated to me.

There were, however, a sufficient number of positive reactions to give a fairly good indication of where some of the allies in the congregation were located. From that point on (this was within the first four months of my pastorate) the only references made to "race relations" in the morning services at the church were indirect—illustrations that were used to point up some other factor (for example, the faith or the compassion or the dedication of a minority person); hymns that pointed toward the world-wide fellowship of all Christians; prayers for brotherhood in general and for commitment of individual Christians in particular to the way of brotherhood; and sermons whose purpose was to create a sense of community or "we-ness," that is, which sought to raise the sights of individual Christians above their personal relationship with God to a sense of oneness and mutual responsibility within the world community as well as the local community.

Following a careful testing out of the congregation, I was able to discover two or three committed Christians who were dedicated to the task that lay before our church. Visits, conferences, and discussions on an informal basis with these persons enlisted their support.

When the subject of, "What are we going to do about the Negro

situation?" or, "What will we do if a colored person ever applies for church membership, or attends church?" came up in the session, those two or three of us who were dedicated to the task mentioned above always sought to keep the discussion at the level of Christian responsibility and not get involved in speculation about, "What will our white members think?" or, "What about our young people?" We tried to keep it at the level of *our* personal responsibility as Christian leaders. We scrupulously avoided a showdown vote or discussion of the issue which would have solidified and organized the pros and the cons at an early stage when such a solidification could have been disastrous. We further avoided the passing of any resolution that would commit the session to do that which it ought to have done anyway as a matter of course.

The reason for this avoidance of a commitment was twofold: First, we felt that it would be immoral to pass special "legislation" that would apply only to Negroes who sought church membership but not to others. In a word, we believed that the only basis for membership in the Presbyterian Church is profession of faith in Jesus Christ; and to pass special legislation permitting Negroes to join a church would be to create and then remove a prohibition that does not exist. Secondly, we rejected any formal resolution because it would have drawn "battle lines" and divided the church into two opposed camps of which our group would have been a very small and insignificant minority.

We thus blundered, by the grace of God, into a recognition of one of the simple and profound principles of education, i.e., that people's attitudes, particularly on such potentially explosive issues as race relations, are not changed by arguments or votes but rather by actual association and experience with the people whom they have previously rejected, or toward whom they have been hostile. If we had sought to convince a majority of the session and the congregation before we were willing to take any kind of action, we would have failed and precluded forever any possibility of building an inclusive church. I personally feel that this principle is of first importance.

So much for the description of the situation of the church in the closing weeks of 1949 and for the initial and preparatory steps that were taken. Comes now a description of the process of integration.

The Process Followed

Full use was made of all the routine opportunities of exposing white Christians to associations with Negro Christians, opportunities that are available to most city churches: pulpit exchanges on Race Relations Sunday (a concession to a sinful

society in that we needed the justification of Race Relations Sunday to have such an exchange); the use of Negro speakers in women's association and circle programs; the reading in the opening half hour of several session meetings of the social pronouncements of our General Assembly, among which was the pronouncement for "a nonsegregated church and a nonsegregated society"; and much later, after the first Negroes had become members of the church, a visit on the part of many persons of the congregation to an evening service and social hour in a large Negro Baptist church, on its invitation.

Repeated efforts were made in pastoral calling to meet creatively, calmly, rationally, and sympathetically the fears and prejudices expressed by white members of the church in relationship to Negro neighbors. In retrospect it now appears that more time and attention should have been given to community organization than was given. For example, it might well have been possible to form neighborhood councils, composed of the residents of a particular block, led by a sympathetic church member living in that block, to get the residents acquainted with each other and dedicated to making their neighborhood as attractive and stable as possible. The needs and wishes of homeowners are similar, regardless of their color.

During the closing weeks of 1949 I drove back and forth on every street within five blocks of the church and noted down the addresses of houses that displayed "For Sale" signs. I assumed that when the signs disappeared these houses had been sold and new people had moved in. I then made it a practice to call on these new residents, without knowing or caring whether they were white or colored, welcoming them to the community, inviting them to church, and assuring them, particularly when they were Negroes, of a welcome from the people whose attitudes I was sure of.

Use was repeatedly made of contacts outside the church congregation with the parent-teacher group (the president of which was a Negro lady who subsequently became one of the first Negro members of the church); boy scout troop (which later, by reason of its exposure to the church's practice of inclusiveness, became racially inclusive); labor union officials; the local council of social agencies; the Council of Church's Public Affairs executive; pastors of Negro churches; the city planning commission; the members and leaders of a small interracial church, consciously begun as an interracial fellowship and drawing its members from liberal elements all over the city; and any other individuals or groups with whom association could

mean beneficial results either for them or for St. Andrew's Church, or for both.

The two or three laymen whose support was assured in the beginning also co-operated in the program of making the church inclusive. This small group gradually grew in size and effectiveness. Without their work the task could not have been accomplished. One of them, who leaned in the right direction but was not quite one hundred per cent certain of where he stood, said to me after a Sunday morning service: "A Negro family moved into the block where I live. What shall I do about it?" I asked him what he would do if the family were white, and he replied that he would probably invite them to come to church. I then said, "Well, you decide what you should do about this family." He began by bringing their children with his own children to Sunday school. Later he and his wife stopped by for the Negro mother and brought her to church with them, and she became one of the first Negroes, along with the president of the parent-teacher association, to join the church.

It was extremely difficult to persuade residents of the neighborhood, white or colored, to unite with the church, or even to attend church. There were a substantial number of white residents, perhaps fifteen or twenty, who had been attending St. Andrew's off and on over a period of years, but who had resisted any efforts to persuade them to unite with the church. Among the white residents of the neighborhood an extremely difficult obstacle to overcome in attempting to persuade them to join the church was their expressed and unexpressed feeling that they were only temporary residents, "living out of a suitcase," so to speak. They expected to move away within a year or two at most (some had been saying this for twenty years, I learned). They were therefore loathe to commit themselves or identify themselves with a congregation that would remain in the neighborhood after they left. Some of them did, however, after persistent effort by the pastor and some laymen, unite with the church.

The Negro residents of the neighborhood, for the most part quite new, were loathe to come into the church fellowship for another reason. Although nearly all of them regarded themselves as fairly permanent residents, and the vast majority of them were buying their own homes, they tended to regard any invitation or assurance of welcome with skepticism because of the long history of their experiences to the contrary in a "white society." Without exception they expressed their gratitude for the invitation and for the assurance of welcome, and almost without exception they did not respond to it in any except a

verbal way. They were so used to hearing from white organizations noble words and resolutions that were not followed up with any kind of consistent action (and which therefore meant nothing) that they were not willing to accept at face value another such verbal invitation.

There was further the ingrained habit pattern of associating exclusively with Negro groups, just as in the white community there is the ingrained pattern of the years which has precluded any association across racial lines. This experience, confirmed by dozens of other witnesses, lays dead the old fear of white Christians that "if the doors are opened, they will take over!"

Thus the invisible wall that keeps Negro Christians out of white churches had to be breached both from the outside and from the inside. Two things were necessary to open the way from the outside:

1. As in the case described above, if a white member of St. Andrew's called upon and invited a new Negro family to attend church and assured them that he would stop at their home and sit with them in church, this alleviated the fear on the part of the Negro family that they would be given at best a cold welcome and at worst a request to leave. They regarded themselves, quite rightly, as being in the hands of at least one friend.

2. In instances where it was not possible to secure positive and aggressive lay "big brothers" or "big sisters" for new Negro people, another approach was reasonably successful in securing their interest and eventually their attendance. This was simply a sincere statement, which went something like this: "I am the pastor of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, which is located at Twelfth and Glendale. I want to welcome you as a new resident of our neighborhood and assure you of my personal friendship. I wonder if I might come in and talk with you for a few moments?"

Then would follow the usual inquiries as to where the family originated, the number of children they had, and what they were interested in, etc., following which the conversation was diverted in this direction: "You have, as you know, moved into a mixed neighborhood. I am concerned to know the kind of reception you have been given." This remark was almost always met with the assurance that nothing much had happened so far as the white neighbors were concerned. The new Negro family simply had had no association with, or advances, either friendly or unfriendly, from their white neighbors. Then: "The Church I serve is interested in doing what it can to break down the pattern of segregation. We are concerned that the Church itself is perhaps the most segregated institution in America. We feel that we have been given an opportunity to do a

little bit to break this pattern of segregation which is wrong, unchristian, and un-American. However, we need your help in order to do this.

"We are trying to build an inclusive, unsegregated *Christian* fellowship in our church, but we can't do this unless you and other Negroes are willing to attend our church. I cannot assure you that every single member of the white congregation will make you feel welcome. However, I can assure you that a significant number of the congregation *will* make you feel welcome. Won't you come to our church for a few Sundays? If you like it and feel that you can worship God and find Christian fellowship there, then think about uniting with the church. On the other hand, I would certainly not want you to attend our church simply as a social experiment. You should come as a Christian seeking Christian fellowship and the presence of God. I personally think you will be able to find them at St. Andrew's. But in any case, won't you visit us for a time at least until you see whether you like it? Help us out as we seek to build an inclusive Christian fellowship."

In a few cases this approach to Negro people resulted in their attending church, even without being accompanied by a white family.

As had been promised to these new attenders at St. Andrew's, there were a sufficient number of Christians whose consciences would not let them be rude and a small minority of Christians who were positively committed to building an inclusive fellowship to counteract the cold shoulder which was given by many of the white congregation to the new Negro worshipers. Although they may not have felt warmly welcomed, they certainly did not feel that they were being rejected. Not a single unpleasant incident or "scene" occurred during this initial period when two, three, four, or five Negroes began to attend St. Andrew's Church.

Those families, both Negro and white, who for the first time had been attending church fairly regularly over a period of a month or so, were then urged seriously to consider membership in the church. Three Negro persons—the president of the parent-teacher association, her husband, and the mother first brought to church by the white layman—indicated their willingness to unite with the church. A communicants' class was formed, made up of these three Negroes and about five or six white persons who also expressed a desire to join. The communicants' class met once a week for six weeks, during which time they received instruction and were encouraged to discuss the great doctrines of our faith. Only indirectly during this instruction period was

the subject of race relations ever brought out, but the indirect implications of the Christian faith in this area were quite obvious. The result was that among the new white members was an addition to the core of white Christians who were at least passively sympathetic, if not positively committed, to an inclusive fellowship. Further, when the group of communicants were received in a body by the congregation they came in as a group who knew each other by their first names and who demonstrated before the congregation the kind of Christian friendship and fellowship that had been implicit in the church.

Incidentally, the session was apprised as a matter of course of the fact that there would probably be Negro Christians in the new communicants' class, prior to the time that they were to be received. There was some discussion on this point, but previous conditioning and the calm, positive witness of one very strong Christian elder on the simple responsibility of the Christian Church to receive all people who profess Jesus Christ established a kind of "it goes without saying" atmosphere in which it became obvious that there is only one thing for a Christian church to do in such a situation. In other words, there was discussion, frank, with some fearful feelings expressed on the part of some of the session members, but no resolutions and no votes.

The first Negro Christians were received into membership in St. Andrew's Church in the late spring or early summer of 1950. We had expected to lose some members, both when Negroes started to attend and particularly when the first Negroes were taken into membership. As a matter of fact, we were not sure what would happen. We were sure only that we had committed ourselves to what we believed to be right (by "we" I mean the three or four of us who knew the road which our church must walk). To my knowledge, only about two or three families left the church directly as a result of Negroes' being received into membership. It is unquestionable that several other families who were what might be called "fringe members" and who participated only occasionally in the life and worship of the church needed only this one stimulus to nudge them completely out of the church's fellowship. The net loss of white members as a result of Negroes in the fellowship of the church was negligible. And to be realistic, these losses at worst occurred only a few months or perhaps a couple of years earlier than they would have occurred in the normal course of events had the church remained an exclusively white fellowship and thus gradually deteriorated.

One interesting incident occurred in which a white woman some months earlier had joined the

church (as I later learned) in order to escape the presence of Negroes in the congregation of the Episcopal church to which she had belonged about a mile and half down the street from St. Andrew's. She was present when the first Negro members were received into St. Andrew's and her reaction, voiced to me in her home a few days later, was, "I guess the time is coming when there will be no place to run any more."

During these initial stages of integration, the matter of "the Negro problem" was a rather constant subject of clandestine conversation among the members of the church and the residents of the community. There were vague rumors that the pastor was deliberately seeking out Negroes to join the church. The supporters of the pastor, *many of whom were not in favor of an inclusive church,* were quick to defend him on this score; and he himself was not eager to enter into the discussion on either side. There was even a rumor at about this period (toward the end of 1950) that some of the members were getting up a petition that would request presbytery to get rid of the pastor. Nothing ever came of this rumor, and I am convinced that it was nothing more than that. During the remainder of 1950 and through 1951 the process of desegregation continued slowly but steadily.

The new Negro members, as in the case of any church members, naturally talked to their friends about their church. Their friends expressed interest and gratification that a church home should be satisfying, and that's all they did. *There was no wave of Negroes either attending or desiring to unite with the church at any time.* However, in following up the contacts suggested by new members of the church, white or Negro, we were able to persuade a few of them to begin to attend church and a few of these ultimately to unite with the church, again, in the case of the Negroes, using when necessary the same approach—"Will you as a Christian help us break the pattern of segregation?"

It was the policy of the session that no member should be received into the church by confession of faith or reaffirmation of faith without first undergoing the period of instruction. This policy was completely independent of any racial concern; it was simply a wise precaution to make sure that new members understood the nature of the Presbyterian Christian faith. In this particular situation it served a double purpose not only of instructing new members in the meaning of their faith but also of involving them in the fellowship of a small interracial group of which they became a part in the communicants' class. Since securing decisions to join the church was extremely difficult anyway, it was a simple matter to assure that any group of people who would be received by the session and later by

the congregation would be predominantly white. This was an acknowledged concession to the sinful facts of life as they existed in a white Christian group, and constituted a moral compromise with the fears and prejudices created by generations of segregated living. The courage that was demanded of the Negro minority in such a group was never discussed, but it was apparent to anyone who was willing to give thought to the matter.

During all this time, and with greater acceleration and ease, the Sunday school was also integrating Negro children into its classes. One or two white families removed their children from the Sunday school as a result. These families were not members of the church. The children themselves had no difficulty whatsoever. For them there was no "problem," and no adjustment necessary. Their association with each other was from the beginning perfectly free, normal, and natural.

Integrated Leadership

About a year after the first Negroes had joined the church and Negro children were in numbers in the Sunday school, after "friendships" had been established across racial lines within the fellowship of the church, and social affairs such as church suppers had included the new members without incident, efforts were made to initiate the process whereby Negro members of the church could begin to assume leadership responsibilities commensurate with their talents and abilities.

The problem of securing Sunday school teachers was a perennial one, and it was relatively easy to find first one, then two and three qualified Negro members to take the place of white teachers who had for various reasons, including death and moving from the neighborhood, given up their teaching positions. This "change" in the Sunday school teaching staff was carried through without serious incident and, of course, there was no effort made to segregate the Negro pupils under the new Negro teachers.

Efforts were made to persuade one or two Negro members who had good voices to join the choir. Again the "change" from an all-white choir to a truly representative choir occurred without incident.

On Laymen's Sunday in 1951, when the laymen of the church traditionally conducted the morning worship, one of the Negro members participated. For some strange reason, this seemed to be the straw that broke the camel's back for one white member of the session who had always been opposed, verbally though not aggressively, to the practice of an inclusive Christian fellowship. He resigned from the session and from membership in the church, and although his wife was deeply sorrowed because of his action, she accom-

panied him to join another white church.

During the whole process of integration at the leadership level it was found that one of the church's most serious problems was being met for the first time in years. The task of finding capable lay leadership is always serious in most churches. In an unstable, "deteriorating" white church it is well-nigh insoluble. Those few who are qualified frequently lose the motivation to serve, and leadership is found, if at all, increasingly among those who are willing but least capable.

In St. Andrew's Church at this time it was discovered that the "new" members had qualifications and manifested willingness to serve out of all proportion to their numbers. Indeed, it became necessary after a while to become "wise as a serpent" lest the lay leadership in the church and Sunday school become more "colorful" than the slowly adjusting white members could bear.

A revealing incident occurred after eight months of inclusive worship. In the closing weeks of 1950, during the annual meeting of the congregation, the white layman who had originally brought the first Negro member to church with him was nominated by the session's nominating committee for eldership. For the first time in the history of the church a nomination was made from the floor and this man was defeated in the election. There was no question in the mind of anyone as to the reason for his defeat. This incident illustrates the delicate balance between acceptance and hostility which is maintained in this type of transitional period. The man who was defeated for eldership had in effect committed ecclesiastical suicide by acting upon his Christian convictions several months earlier when he brought a Negro neighbor to church with him.

During the entire three years following the initial stages of integration the process was a fluid and dynamic one. The pastor and the leaders who were giving him support in the program had to be constantly sensitive to the currents and undercurrents of sentiment which flowed back and forth within the congregation and its organizations. But the three years passed without untoward incident other than a continuation of tension. The problems of finding new members and qualified (and acceptable) lay leadership continued to be the major ones. During the four years from August, 1949, to August, 1953, the membership roll of St. Andrew's Church went from 460 to 390. This was due in part to the suspension of approximately 150 members who had not prior to this time, and had not during this period, participated actively in the life of the church. The number of suspensions was not, in any significant de-

gree, the result of the inclusiveness of the church. *As a matter of fact, there is some indication to justify the belief that it would have been greater had the process of integration not been going on.*

During this period of four years something like 150 new members were received into the church, about ninety per cent on confession or reaffirmation of faith. The church receipts, both current and benevolent, increased substantially, and the ratio of benevolence to current receipts nearly doubled.

In spite of the continued existence of passively diffident elements in the church a new solidarity, sense of mission, and optimism gradually could be sensed. In the case of a few individuals, numbering perhaps seven or ten, *radical* changes in their conception of the Christian faith and in their sense of dedication resulted from their new experience of Christian fellowship at a deeper level. Surface indications of this deepening sense of commitment were evident in the doubling and trebling of financial pledges and in a willingness to give increased time and talents by a few of these Christians.

One important action that aided the continuing process in the church was taken in 1953 by Detroit Presbytery, which in effect called for local churches to take stock of the General Assembly's pronouncements on segregation, and for sessions to remember that the only basis for membership in the Presbyterian Church was a confession of faith in Jesus Christ. This action by the presbytery received publicity in the Detroit newspapers and, along with the General Assembly's repeated actions, strengthened the hand of the small but growing group within St. Andrew's who were pressing toward more thorough integration.

At the beginning of 1953, after the process had been continuing for slightly over three years, an interpretive report was made at the annual congregational meeting by one of the elders. In this report, what had been happening in the church was placed in its large context of the Bible and the contemporary world situation and was tactfully interpreted to the congregation. The report was received by the unanimous vote of the congregation (which is not to be regarded as unanimous *approval*). This is the only time in the whole course of integration that any public discussion or vote was permitted on the immediate question of St. Andrew's Church and integration.

Following this report to the congregation a press release was prepared and submitted to the two main daily papers in Detroit. It is my personal feeling that both the report and the press release helped give impetus to the process which had been going on for three years. *The timing of it, however, is important to note.* Discussion and publicity oc-

curred only *after* integration was irrevocably under way. They were not intended to persuade people in the initial stages that integration was the course that the church ought to take. Rather, their purpose was to put the weight of congregational vote and the daily press behind what was a *fait accompli,* to lend it a kind of public acclaim, and thereby hopefully to sway those who were still passively skeptical of the way things were going.

Early in 1954, Rev. Malcolm Sylvester was called to the pastorate of the church, and he now continues the program of integration.

At the time of my departure as pastor the ratio of Negroes to white people in the congregation on any given Sunday was about one to ten, with a membership of eleven Negroes to a white membership of approximately 379. As this report is being written in October of 1954, I understand that the membership ratio is now approximately three to ten, with the Sunday school membership being considerably closer to the fifty-fifty mark. Every indication is that St. Andrew's Church is deeply committed to, and prospering under its practice of, "a fellowship for *all* believers."

A POSTSCRIPT BY REV. MALCOLM B. SYLVESTER, PASTOR, ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

At this writing, the church continues its course of integration calmly, peacefully, and naturally.

During the four-month pastorless interim, the lay leadership of the church, especially the elders and trustees, held firm to the principles and practices of the preceding years. Realizing the full extent of their responsibilities in the absence of a pastor, the men and women of the church labored hard and with increased devotion to the ongoing work of the church.

In the fall of 1954 the young adults enjoyed an overnight retreat in a nearby state park, with their membership made up of approximately half white and half Negro Christians. A women's group has a similar racial membership, with all rejoicing in their new-found fellowship. The session is interracial, as are most of the other groups in the church. Fifty-four new members have been received into the church's fellowship during the first ten months of 1954 (as compared with seventeen during 1953), and to the best of my recollection, since no racial records are kept, the same "color ratio" obtained.

Financial statistics in and of themselves are acknowledged to be superficial indications of a church's condition, but taken with other factors, they certainly constitute *one* standard of evaluation. St. Andrew's

Church became a racially inclusive fellowship in 1950. Many factors undoubtedly go into the following statistical record, but a deeper sense of fellowship and commitment must be recognized as one of the most important elements in it.

	Current Receipts	*Total Benevolences*	*G.A. Benevolences*
1949	$11,795	$2,300	$1,648
1950	12,638	2,937	1,868
1951	12,915	4,347	2,540
1952	11,435	4,552	2,807
1953	16,195	5,378	3,608

It is, of course, impossible to conjecture what the picture would have been had St. Andrew's remained a segregated congregation, and speculation is superfluous anyhow. I believe that the course of action this church has taken was God-inspired and right, and, after all, that is the only Christian reason for doing anything. The fruits have been incidental, but wonderful to behold.

West Cincinnati-St. Barnabas Church

Cincinnati, Ohio

By MAURICE F. McCRACKIN, *Minister*

IN JANUARY, 1945, Dr. Earl North, then executive secretary of Cincinnati Presbytery, wrote asking whether I would be interested in coming as the pastor of West Cincinnati Presbyterian Church. I had been at the Waldensian Presbyterian Church in Chicago less than three years and replied to Dr. North that I was not interested in making a change at that time.

A few months later, in Chicago, he told me that since January final steps had been taken for the federation of the West Cincinnati Presbyterian Church and the St. Barnabas Episcopal Church a block and a half away. He described the neighborhood as one of great crowding, with a changing population, then about seventy per cent Negro. He told me that with the exception of the weekday church school and city health clinic there was no Negro participation in the program of either church. The mixed pattern in these two activities was, of course, set by the public schools and the city. There had come the practical question of survival for each congregation and also a growing conviction that a church has a responsibility to serve all its neighbors.

At this time the thinking of the congregation, or at least of its leaders, was one of gradual integration. That viewpoint, which I at first accepted and which now seems to me naïve and compromising, was this: Since Cincinnati is a "northern city with a southern exposure," an intermediate step must be taken before any effort could be made toward integration. This step was to organ-

ize a Negro church and Sunday school in the St. Barnabas building. This program and the continuing federated program at what was the Presbyterian church would develop under a single supervisory board. Steps toward integration could then be taken through bringing together groups from the two churches, with the faith that eventually the two congregations would unite.

I had not had at that time a day-by-day acquaintance with Negroes as neighbors and friends. I had worked with the NAACP; in Chicago I was part of a mixed clergy group, Negro and white, Protestant and Roman Catholic, which had a deep concern over tension and violence resulting from Negroes' moving into our area. I had serious doubts about coming to Cincinnati and agreeing to the organization of this separate Negro work. I talked with a minister who had suffered a great deal for his convictions along this line and was reassured when he said there are times when such an intermediate step may be necessary but that the important thing is to keep the goal of complete inclusiveness always in mind and steadily work toward it.

J. Albert Dalton was the pastor of the St. Barnabas Church, and we became co-pastors of the West Cincinnati-St. Barnabas Church. The federating service was held on August 5, 1945. Shortly afterward Mr. Dalton took a trip to New York and Cleveland and visited several institutions that were serving all their neighbors on an inclusive basis. He returned, convinced that a segregated Negro church should not be organized. By this time I was also equally convinced. In discussing the future use of the St. Barnabas building, we suggested that we organize a program along the lines of a settlement and call a social worker as its director. This would give us a common meeting ground across church and racial lines, making it possible to become acquainted with our neighbors, which in turn we were confident would affect the racial pattern of the church. T. T. Clement, a Negro, was employed about October 1, 1945, as the program director of this work, and shortly afterward, Mrs. Helen Lee, also a Negro, was employed as the head group worker.

Since for blocks around there was no other leisure time center for Negroes, the St. Barnabas building, which came to be called the Findlay Street Neighborhood House, was used almost entirely by Negro children and young people. Each Saturday night an evening for dancing drew between five and six hundred young people. Both churches had had teen-age canteens. These combined, and for over a year segregated canteens were conducted at the Neighborhood House. A little later, this, along with all other segre-

gated groupings in our program, was eliminated.

From the start we went on the premise that the way to get rid of segregated thinking and practices is to expose people to each other. These are some of the ways in which this was done:

Mrs. Lee and a white volunteer went to Sands School, just next door to the church, and visited several classes, telling them that a brownie girl scout troop would be organized that night, and urged the girls to join. Some twenty Negro and white girls came. This group was conducted for some time under a Negro and a white leader. This troop of girls and a mixed boys' club that was soon organized met in the church building.

In October notices were sent out into the community and to the church members that a community council would be organized at the Neighborhood House to which all adults were invited. This was the first opportunity for the church members to become really acquainted with their Negro neighbors. Many had been unhappy in their isolation but had not found a way of building a bridge. We came together not as Negro and white people but as individuals interested in common community concerns and problems. At Christmas time a party and program brought out some seventy adults, about equally divided between the two groups.

In the fall of 1945 a day nursery at Heberle School, three blocks from the church, had closed because funds had been cut off. Miss Dorothy Ratterman, who had been a teacher in this school, opened a nursery at the church. Negro children would have been made welcome although none applied until early summer, 1947. During this period a fine relationship had been built up between the then all-white group and the Negro youngsters in the neighborhood. One Monday morning a white youngster came from an all-white community and when he first saw the Negro children, he expressed some fear and dislike toward them. Miss Ratterman told him that after a few days he would not feel that way and that he should try to be friendly with them.

A week later another white youngster was enrolled and expressed the same negative reactions. He was overheard by the first youngster, who said: "Miss Ratterman, that was the way I felt when I first came, wasn't it? But I don't now." This group of children did a great deal the next year in witnessing to brotherhood. They took trips together on the buses, visited an otherwise segregated Negro swimming pool, and always had a wonderful time together.

At the time of the federation there were some twenty high school age young people in the youth group of

the church. The Negro canteen committee at the Neighborhood House, made up of an equal number of young people, were invited to the church for a Sunday evening. There were two or three such exchanges between the groups, one of which was an invitation from the Negro group to attend a dance at which the Kentucky State orchestra would play. Mr. Dalton and I wondered whether the church group would accept. The question was never raised with us and all the church young people went. It was a grand evening and none but good comments were heard afterward from any quarter.

One member of the youth group was a boy named George. He was sixteen, rough and ready, and especially ready to toss out the Negro children when they wanted to come in to play. That was before the churches decided that they should start to practice what they were preaching.

In October, Youth Sunday was held and one of the speakers was George. The theme was brotherhood, and among other things he said: "Let a German come to the service, or an Englishman or a Scotsman, and you wouldn't say anything. If a Japanese person came, you probably wouldn't mind. But let a Negro come to church and you would holler your heads off." Another young person, a girl, paraphrased the story of the Good Samaritan, naming a nearby street where a white person had been robbed and beaten. A minister and then an officer of a white church came by but were so anxious to get to church they went right on. Then a Negro came to the man, bound up his cuts, and took him to General Hospital. This talk was especially significant because no adult gave any direct guidance in what should be said. In a few weeks the change of attitude on the part of the church leadership had been caught and enthusiastically interpreted.

Extremely important to our growth in brotherhood has been our camping program. Camp Joy was a segregated camp that had been operated by St. Barnabas Church. The summer of 1946 was the first camping season under the federation. The first two summers we had a completely integrated staff, but the campers were taken on a segregated basis. It was interesting to watch the counselors who from accepted custom came with their friendships established along racial lines. It was not long until a shift could be seen—Negro and white counselors grouping. For the first time many became close friends with members of the other racial group. Joe was a Negro counselor. I took one of his campers, a white boy, home at the close of the period. He told me: "Where I live I've seen a lot of Negroes but I never really knew them. But I know Joe. Gee, he's a swell guy!"

Each camping period ran for five days. Because of a neighborhood percentage there were many more Negro children wanting to go than white. At the end of the period for white girls about ten fourteen- to sixteen-year-old girls wanted to go back the next week. We told them that it wasn't fair to the Negro girls. It would crowd them, and there just wouldn't be any room. However, all ten of them appeared bag and baggage at the bus the following Monday morning. We put it up to the Negro girls as to whether they should go. They said, "Sure, let them come." They were in the same unit, about twenty-five of them, and called themselves "The Bashful Brats." These girls were telling us what we in our adult "wisdom" didn't understand—that we should have had the Negro and white children come together from the beginning. We had surrendered to the idea of gradualism, and because no other camp in Cincinnati had had a mixed camping program on any level, we went along with the idea that "you have to go slow."

The first Negroes to attend the worship service of the church were our staff members and their families and occasionally their friends.

When the Neighborhood House work began we organized an advisory board, about two thirds Negro and one third white. The governing board of the church is made up of representatives from the congregation, from the diocese, and from the presbytery. Since the Neighborhood House was under the supervision of this board, it was felt that the advisory board should be officially represented on the governing board, and the two Negro members were appointed to this board.

Late in July, 1946, Mr. Dalton was ordained to the diaconate of the Episcopal church. I remember his telling me that this was a service to which he was going to invite *all* his friends. There were a number of Negroes present, and several of the Negro young people from camp sang in the choir. A member of the session objected strenuously to having so many Negroes present at Mr. Dalton's ordination and suggested holding a special meeting of the vestry and the session to do something about it. Mr. Dalton and I indicated that if any decision were made to exclude Negroes, we could not in good faith continue our service to the church. The objections were not pressed further.

"Happy," a little girl six years old, brought Junior to church school one morning and hopefully asked a teacher in the primary department, "Can Junior come?" To make sure he would feel at home and not be afraid, Happy held Junior's hand all through the opening worship service. Happy was white and Junior was colored and was the first Negro child in our church school.

In the fall of 1946, the governing board decided that it should face very frankly the inconsistency of conducting interracial activities and groups through the week and still carrying on, so far as membership was concerned, a segregated Sunday program. A special committee was appointed to study the matter, and in the spring of 1947 recommended that there be no segregation in any part of our program. One of the elders who previously had said that he would leave the church when the first Negro was received as a member spoke twice for the recommendation, saying that he could find nothing in the Bible that says a person shall be received into the church on the basis of skin color.

Another member of the board said that he thought the timing was bad; that before Negroes were received into the church and into Sunday school, the union of the two churches should be made stronger. "Why should this be forced on us now?" he asked. "Let some other church do the experimenting." Then another member of the board asked him, "Who forced Junior on you?" Of course, there was no answer to this question. If a church is a church, no one is forcing himself on it by wanting to come.

Those supporting the recommendation pointed out that while in its creed the Church professes belief in brotherhood there are times when this needs to be spelled out. It is not enough to say that a church's policy is not to exclude anyone. *The policy of a church becomes established by its practice, not by what it claims that it stands for.*

It therefore seemed important and necessary that the governing board clearly articulate the policy that should be followed in all phases of our work, church, neighborhood house, and camp. After a thorough discussion, by a vote of twelve in favor and two against, the governing board approved the recommendation of the special policy committee. The Episcopal members of the congregation were called together, and the action of the governing board was interpreted by Bishop Hobson and by members who had been at the governing board meeting. A similar meeting of those of Presbyterian background was called and an interpretation was given by Mr. McCrackin and other board members. *It was simply an interpretation, and no formal action was taken by those present.*

On November 30, 1947, Bishop Henry W. Hobson and the pastor of the congregation officiated at a joint service of confirmation and reception into membership. Three of the new members were Negroes. Their reception broke the pattern of segregation that had existed for generations in both congregations. Now Negro members are completely integrated into the entire life of the

church, serving as teachers, deacons, members of the vestry-session and the governing board.

Concerning the minister's role in bringing a local parish into the practice of inclusiveness, there would be many variables, but common to every situation, I believe these points would apply. A minister taking a strong position on any controversial social issue must care for his parish with the utmost faithfulness and carry his full share of community responsibility. One of the great threats to good causes is for their leaders to lay themselves open and vulnerable at some point that can be used against them.

It is important for the minister to have a light touch. He shouldn't take himself too seriously. He should avoid moralizing on race or on any other issue. A person who already has a guilty conscience isn't helped if he is made to feel like a culprit. "Judge not, that ye be not judged," is a good text for anyone wishing to change the social attitudes of other people. Few people are deeply prejudiced. They've learned the wrong things and need exposure to a different set of values. If they like the person with the new idea and it sounds reasonable, they will usually accept it.

We have come to these conclusions, which we feel are well validated by our own experience and by observation and consultation with other churches in Cincinnati that are in areas of transition:

• First of all, as soon as a Negro family moves into a white neighborhood the family should be called on, as every other new family is, and invited to attend church. Psychological resistance is usually greater as the Negro population increases. What now may be a white minority has a feeling of being overwhelmed and is quite sure that if the doors of the church are opened the Negroes will rush in. It would be fine if people came to church that eagerly, but it just doesn't work that way. Like most people, Negroes as a group don't rush to church but have to be persuaded to come. Especially is this true if they are not sure of their welcome. *Where there is a movement of a Negro population into an area and a movement of the white population out of it, it is not the minority that stages an invasion but the majority that stages a retreat.* Where there is not a retreat, nobody takes over. And in any case, the decision to welcome all peoples into a congregation should not rest on the speculation as to whether many or few Negroes will join. The sole question to ask is, "Is the church going to be Christian?"

In these days of greater mobility of all racial groups it is extremely important that from the beginning of his ministry—in informal conversation and from the pulpit—the minister make it clear that he feels

that the Church, including the church of which he is pastor, should be a congregation for all people. If he speaks often enough and specifically enough on the subject, he will soon discover those who are in agreement with him, those who are making up their minds, and those who have strong feelings against integration.

When the minister has made it clear to his official boards and to his congregation that he believes that the sole basis for reception into church membership should be that of profession of faith in Christ, then the implications of this position should be talked through with the body responsible for the reception of members. A decision will then more likely be reached in the light of Christian principles. Where there has been no open discussion, the congregation runs a great risk of failing in its hour of decision when a Negro desires membership. The people in the congregation who want an inclusive fellowship will be without leadership, and those who are against it will be so vocal and threatening that they will likely carry the day.

• In the second place, the only way to eliminate discriminatory practices in society is to get rid of segregation. Intellectually we may have little prejudice, we may believe that discrimination is wrong; but until people of different racial backgrounds become friends through a breakdown of social segregation, there is not an awareness of the extent or nature of discriminatory acts. *It is when a friend is being hurt that we are sufficiently motivated to do something about acts of discrimination.* The ideal place to be motivated to concern and action is in the inclusive fellowship of a congregation.

• In the third place, growth in individual attitudes and the breaking of social mores come only through the conflict that ensues when traditional patterns are challenged. So long as there is no challenge or conflict, the majority group says, "There is no problem." Specific proposals should be initiated by the minister or board of the church, such as an interchange of pulpit or choirs with a Negro congregation, or a proposal to employ a Negro staff person in other than a custodial position.

• In the fourth place and related to the last conclusion, every institution that claims to be democratic, and certainly the Church claims to be Christian, must begin now at some point to put into practice its pronouncements on brotherhood. This is the test of good faith. For those who are hesitant and afraid, the time is never ripe to begin. For those suffering the blight of prejudice and discrimination, the time has always been ripe, as it is always ripe for those who take their discipleship of Jesus seriously. Christians may re-

gard first steps toward racial integration with suspicion if done outside the framework of the church or only as an occasional emphasis in some church group. They are far more likely to accept an inclusive fellowship if they know that it is basic to the church's belief. Tragically, the great pronouncements of the Church on the gospel of brotherhood rest in most ministers' files to be used at a more propitious time. Some people may not be ready to receive the gospel, but there should be no moratorium on its being preached and practiced.

Bidwell Street Presbyterian Church

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

By VIRGIL P. MOCCIA, *Minister*

As a white minister in a white church and one who has always felt the incompleteness of segregated Christian fellowship, I was glad in June of 1952 to accept the call of a nearby Negro congregation to become its pastor. My thought was not to create an interracial church, but rather to bear a more relevant witness to my convictions in the field of action and out of the realm of talk.

After serving Bidwell Street Presbyterian Church for one year, and discovering that Negroes were exactly like any other people, I became somewhat depressed. After some thought, I saw that my depression came from the fact that I had exchanged one segregated church for another—where I was once a white pastor of an all-white congregation, I was now a white pastor of an all-Negro congregation.

In September of 1953 in a congregational meeting it was agreed that we would all work and pray for a racially inclusive church. Since then, in ten months (June, 1954), of the new members we have received, twenty-five have been white Christians. We feel we haven't done anything spectacular. We are merely moving, with God's help, in the direction we believe a Christian church should move.

The people of Bidwell Church have participated fully and cooperatively. It is gratifying to find officers and members eager to deepen our fellowship. When people come to this church, regardless of their color, they are given a warm welcome.

We constantly find families, both white and Negro, who are in need, and are not members of our church. Our board of deacons, with limited resources, has tried to meet the needs of these families, many of whom join the church. Also, a twice-

yearly revival service usually brings more families into the church.

In visits in the homes of white families I have stressed that their presence and witness is needed to further the work and worship of our integrated church; and that they need the benefits of the church. Many white people who come to Bidwell, like many Negro members, become enthusiastic about their church and invite their friends to attend. Meanwhile, we seek to make the life of our church reflect at all levels—on the official boards, in the choirs, in the Sunday school, and in the weekday programs—an ever-deepening and inclusive fellowship.

Our session has stressed again and again the importance of prayer and keeping our work Christ-centered.

Fort Schuyler Presbyterian Church

Bronx, New York

By HOWARD M. WEAVING, *Minister*

COMING from a small church in New England to New York City, I had little preparation for the great task awaiting in guiding a growing urban church. Little did I know that this task involved the transition from a white, middle-class, individual homeowners congregation in a "restricted" neighborhood, to a wonderfully fine interracial Christian church fellowship which eagerly, warmly, and literally threw its Sunday school and church doors open in welcome to all, asking no questions as to the racial or national background of a family moving into the community, but sending them a note of welcome, a calendar with the hours of Sunday school and church, and an invitation to come.

In all of the Throgs Neck area of the Borough of the Bronx, from the the time of its being the farm land of Jonas Bronck, there were to be found only one or two Negro families living quietly, obscurely unnoticed, except for the occasional appearance of a child on the platform of the local public school at graduation.

Then, in 1951-1952 came the rumors: "low-cost public housing, apartment buildings, displacement of many good, individually owned homes, depreciation of property values, undesirable elements"—rumors all, and then, protest meetings!

In my mail one morning was an invitation to attend a meeting called by one of the local homeowners groups to discuss the matter. This

invitation, it was noted, was sent to other members of the clergy, which I took to mean the only other church in the immediate area, the Roman Catholic church. It was also noted that I would have an opportunity to speak. I have been ever grateful for this, for, as it happened, I was the only pastor who appeared, the chairman regretfully noting the absence of the pastor of the Roman Catholic church.

Most of those assembled were there for information, particularly to find out whose homes and property were to be taken. When it came my opportunity to speak, such was the temper of the meeting that my words were few indeed, but I did remind the exceptionally large crowd that we were morally bound to do what is right, to show proper respect to all, and to work together seeking for all people their God-given rights to live and help others also to live. I commended them on being conscientiously concerned American citizens, anxious, as I am sure they were, to act not as Nazis or Communists but as true and loyal Americans.

The speech was loudly applauded, and as I look back upon it, it was a providential moment. In visits later in the homes of newcomers, several times the question was put to me, "But I thought the church opposed this project; I heard that the church tried to get the project defeated!" and I could say to these people, proudly pointing to the only Protestant church in the immediate area, "The Fort Schuyler Presbyterian Church offered no opposition whatever!"

In the days that followed, some of us talked, unofficially and freely, about the opportunities ahead, of the expanding of our church facilities, the possibilities of double sessions in the Sunday school and worship services in the church, instigating the latter a year in advance of the opening of the project. I said on one occasion at the annual meeting that we would see many changes, the expansion of many of the undesirable influences in the community, such as the barrooms, which would welcome everyone they could as their patrons. To counteract this, the church must certainly exert an ever greater influence, welcoming each family with a bouquet of flowers or potted plant. This we were never able to do, but at least the desire was there.

The matter of racial integration was never brought up before the church or session for an "official action," for as far as I was concerned, and all knew it, there was only one action which a Christian church could take; no other action was even considered. In the informal conversations with elders, Sunday school superintendent, deacons, and other individuals, it was constantly noted that: "We work together, we

eat together, certainly we should worship together!" "It's character, not color that counts!" I have ever been grateful to those influential officers in the church who took the only stand a Christian can take—of welcoming all people "with the friendliness of Jesus"!

The same week that the first families moved in, I was there, having plowed through deep mud, bringing a cordial welcome to the newcomers, wishing them luck in their new homes, stating that the church was eager and ready to welcome them and help them in any way. I often think that the mud on my shoes carried as much weight as the words I said. Upon departing, sometimes after having had a word of prayer with the family, but more often after just a friendly brief conversation, taking the names of the children, I would always leave a little reminder of my call. It might be a church calendar, a card they could send to me if they needed anything, a magazine for daily devotion, or one of our little folders containing a brief word about the church, the hours of Sunday school and worship, urging each one to make this his church home.

Our Sunday school superintendent and our teachers were anxious to welcome all God's children to his church. With several years of the Faith and Life curriculum behind them, they were committed to call him Lord and to do the things he asked of them. And so the children came, just a few at a time. A note of welcome was sent to the home from the Sunday school. And the parents followed the children, accepting the invitation to become members of the church, and they are coming, slowly, but regularly, even more faithfully than many of the members of long standing.

When the pastor presented the names to be received into church membership by the session, no mention ever was made of the race of the person. When committees are named and someone wants to know, "Which Smith family is it?" the answer is, "The Smith Family of Dewey Avenue" or "The Smiths who have three children in the Sunday school"; never, "The colored family on Dewey Avenue" or "The Smiths who have the three Negro children in the Sunday school." Mr. Brown is never "the colored man who sings in the choir." He's "Mr. Brown, the new member who sings in the choir."

Our progress has been slow and has not been without some undesirable incidents. Many who had planned for years to move from the community to own their homes upstate or out on Long Island or in New Jersey took advantage of the rumors and sold their homes for the lush, inflationary prices. There are a few others who, enjoying all the

rights and privileges of a select and richly endowed neighborhood, would deny these to any and all others. There are some who resent any and all newcomers, preferring unclean and unkempt swamps to beautifully landscaped homes and gardens, and happy families. But for each of these blind and foolish ones, there are the good and faithful Christians who rise adequately to the tremendous opportunities ahead, hoping and praying to be equal to the demands, such as the great need for a new church educational building.

While our progress has been slow, it has also been sure and wholesome. Since becoming an interracial church, we have for the first time had our budget for current expenses, benevolences, building fund, etc., totally subscribed by our weekly pledges. Our attendances require double church services and double sessions for Sunday school. On all sides, members are becoming more concerned, with more individuals doing more individual jobs, working together as those who love the Lord, with and for all of us whom he has called to be his children.

First Presbyterian Church

Mount Vernon, New York

By MELVIN J. JOACHIM, *Minister*

MOUNT VERNON is within the metropolitan area of New York City, a commuters' city of some seventy-five thousand population, twenty-five minutes from Grand Central Station. The church, whose congregation is middle class, with no extremely wealthy or poor people, is located in a residential area.

The community is rapidly changing from "the city of homes" to one of large apartments, including a Government housing project. When members of other races began to attend Sunday school and church there was no apparent shock to anyone. We hardly were aware of it until one teacher said her department was a regular United Nations in miniature—Negro, Puerto Rican, Chinese, Japanese, and others from several European countries. No one seemed to consider it an insurmountable handicap, but several were concerned when the question of joining the church became a reality. A few admitted that now our own Christianity was about to be tested and a Christian witness made as to the race question.

In small group discussion everyone seemed to agree that all were entitled to the advantages of our worship services and program activities. Ours was surely an inclusive

church for all. To be sure, there were those who did not share this opinion and were not at all in sympathy with this point of view.

Two session meetings were held to consider "the situation." There were honest doubts and sincere fears on the part of a few who, at the same time, made it quite clear that they wanted no part of unfair discrimination. They were simply troubled about the situation and the problems involved. They were confused as to the possible answers and wanted to talk about them.

Some saw it as a problem of education on the part of the colored people. It was pointed out that there were several strong Negro churches in town, among them the Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, and Seventh-Day Adventist. Should we not encourage the colored families to give their leadership and financial support to "their own" churches? Then it was pointed out that these people were Presbyterians and there was no Negro Presbyterian church in our city. We questioned whether we were really considering their welfare or our own. The doubts persisted. Would not our attendance sag and our budget collapse if we once "opened the doors"? We were in a building program; would we ever get our long looked for and greatly needed sanctuary if we took this radical step? As a session, did we not have to face these practical questions realistically?

At long last we knew now we had to face the question of integration seriously and prayerfully if we were to discharge our obligation as elders. We, and we alone had to decide, and the decision had to be made in the heart and mind of each individual elder. Three of the eighteen elders were women of wide experience and leadership. All of the group were of exceptionally high caliber, sincere Christians, and conscious of the sin of race prejudice.

Both session meetings lasted beyond the midnight hour. General Assembly's pronouncements and those of the National Council of Churches were presented. There was no doubt where the denomination or the Church at large stood on this great issue. Spelled out in simple language the voice of the Church was firm and clear—"a nonsegregated church and a nonsegregated society."

The superintendent of schools and several teachers were on the session, also members of the Board of Directors of the "Y" and the Boys' Club. One of the elders had been a missionary in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic for twenty years. Here is a case where leadership and experience proved invaluable. The way would have been difficult without these qualified individuals. There were indeed tense moments, but there were also moments of precious calm—such as when prayer was called for. This

happened several times. Never was I more confident of the presence of God. And several elders mentioned later that they truly felt the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

No minutes were taken of these meetings. No resolutions passed but by unanimous consent, the decision was made that any person making application to unite with the church would be considered, examined, and trained without discrimination. It was felt that this was not a matter for congregational discussion and action but was solely under the jurisdiction of the session.

Four years have gone by. The new sanctuary has been built. Attendance and finances are the best they have ever been. The split in the church that some feared has never occurred. A Negro is teaching in the Sunday school, one sings in the choir, several attend the adult Bible class, one has taught the class. Eight are members of the church. Twice that number are in regular attendance. A few white families have taken their letters to other churches, but to my knowledge no family has confessed to anyone that its reason for leaving was the race question. People are not proud of their prejudices.

One substantial contributor phoned me one day and said he wanted to see me. I must confess I made that call with the feeling, "This is it!" We had been warned that this was one pledge that might be canceled. In brief his conversation went something like this: "Pastor, last night I had a visit from one of your elders and with apparent emotion and fear he told me of recent session meetings. When he had finished I told him that was the most Christian action the session of our church has ever taken. And what is more, if they had decided otherwise I am afraid I would have had to withdraw my support and leave, for I could never belong to a church that deliberately practiced segregation." This story is but one of many that have confirmed our faith.

Frequently we have been told by new friends that they were attracted to our church and impressed by the interracial composition of our congregation and Sunday school. So, we take heart and carry on with greater courage as we face the increasing problems and opportunities of a rapidly changing community. All our fears were without foundation, and we have found a strange new strength and peace that passes all understanding.

In the North, people don't care how high a Negro rises so long as he doesn't get too close.
In the South, people don't care how close a Negro gets so long as he doesn't rise too high.

—Anonymous

People Keep Asking——

" . . . but won't we lose members?"

The following questions are those most frequently asked. The answers are documented, responsible facts and estimates coming from one or more of these sources: the five preceding narratives; conferences with pastors and laymen of inclusive churches; a survey of 13,597 churches of three denominations (including Presbyterian) begun in 1950 by Alfred S. Kramer and completed in 1954 under the sponsorship of the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations of the National Council of Churches; articles by J. Oscar Lee and Kenneth Clarke in the summer, 1954, issue of *The Journal of Negro Education*; an article by Alfred S. Kramer and J. Oscar Lee of the National Council of Churches, in the November-December, 1954, issue of *Interracial News Service*; and the unpublished statements of certain social scientists.

Q. Just how many Presbyterian churches can honestly be called racially "integrated" churches?

A. It depends upon what is meant by "integrated." The 1950 survey returns from 2,706 of the 5,668 Presbyterian churches questioned showed that:

832 churches were racially "inclusive";

433 of these had at least 1 nonwhite member;

344 of the 433 had from 1 to 4 nonwhite members;

52 of the 433 had from 5 to 9 nonwhite members;

37 of the 433 had 10 or more nonwhite members.

Integration is a difficult term to define, since it refers to a quality of fellowship rather than a numerical ratio. But there can be no integration without inclusiveness.

Q. White Christians usually think in terms of bringing nonwhite Christians "into the white church." Are there any instances in which this process has been reversed?

A. Bidwell Street Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh (see page 26) is one example of a Negro congregation that received white members. Its pastor is white. Westminster Presbyterian Church in San Francisco is the result of the union of a white and a Negro congregation. Its pastor is a Negro. At least one Negro Presbyterian church in the deep South has received white members.

Q. Is the "problem" one involving only white and Negro Christians?

A. The "problem" involves all Christians, regardless of their race—Caucasians; American Indians; Americans of Oriental ancestry;

Spanish-speaking Americans, particularly Mexicans and Puerto Ricans; and other minority groups. But the largest, single minority group is the Negro Christian.

Q. If a white church receives colored people, won't it lose members?

A. Perhaps, though not necessarily. It depends on a number of things. In thoroughly integrated churches, pastors have acknowledged that from none to three members have left the church because of the presence of colored people but seldom, if ever, more than that. The 1950 survey showed that of 237,000 church members involved in inclusive congregations, 26 (*twenty-six*) individuals were reported to have left directly because of the church's inclusiveness.

Q. Doesn't the fact that even so few did leave (personally, I think others left, stating other than the real reason) mean that a church might be seriously split if it became inclusive?

A. In every instance in which pastors judged the effect of these few losses, they stated that the fellowship of the church was deepened, warmed, and enhanced.

Q. Many white Christians express themselves so violently on their attitudes toward other races. Several of my most prominent people have told me they would leave the church if any colored person ever joined. I find it hard to believe that the figure of only 26 losses out of 237,000 members is accurate.

A. The answers from pastors, social scientists, and educators are unanimous: "The anticipated behavior predicted by Christians of themselves is far more serious and opposed to open fellowship than is their actual behavior when they face a real situation in their church" (*Interracial News Service*, November-December, 1954); "The likelihood of desegregation being accompanied by active resistance . . . is not directly dependent upon the degree of expressed racial prejudice among the whites prior to desegregation" (Kenneth B. Clarke in *The Journal of Negro Education*, summer, 1954); "One of my elders said he would leave the church if a Negro ever set foot inside. That same elder chatted, shook hands, and served Communion time and again to Negroes as well as whites in his church" (quoted from a pastor of an integrated church). The facts seem to be that white Christians, however violently they may feel, are very indisposed actually to disobey the voice of their Christian consciences when in the fellowship of the church.

Q. I somehow find that difficult to believe. Does this mean that how a person feels has nothing to do with his behavior?

A. Again the research of the social scientists seems to confirm the experiences of many Christian pastors in integrated churches. Kenneth B. Clarke, a psychologist, points out that "examples of successful deseg-

regation (in education) revealed that desired changes in the behavior of individuals and groups can be brought about directly by changes in the social situation in which they . . . function. The belief that attitudinal changes must precede behavioral changes is not supported by these data" (*ibid.*, p. 347).

Another social scientist puts it a different way: "Action is more self-committing than words." A pastor, still a different way: "The best way I know to change the prejudiced attitudes of the average person is to involve him willy-nilly in fellowship across racial lines. Since race prejudice is rooted in the emotions rather than in the intellect, rational arguments against it are futile. But few people, even the most prejudiced, can fail to grow and change when they share the deep experience of worship and friendship in the church with persons of another race."

This means that it is not only unnecessary but probably unwise for church leaders to say, "We have to get the people 'with us' before we can act on this." Very few people can be talked out of, or even talk themselves out of, prejudice. Practically all the integrated churches became so as a result of *action* by leaders who created situations in which cross-racial fellowship began the change in attitudes that nearly always follows.

Q. But what about sermons on "brotherhood," and all the other educational materials? Are they useless?

A. Not at all. But they are probably not nearly so effective as we should like to believe. In addition, the way in which so-called "spoon-feeding" efforts and group discussion are used has a lot to do with their effectiveness. In some situations they may even deepen prejudice and resistance to change.

It is now widely accepted that "preparation" for desegregation depends upon the immediacy of the prospect of integration. In the church located in an all-white community that feels no racial "threat," many wise and skillful long-range educational devices can probably be very effective—field trips, study programs, pulpit and choir exchanges, even sermons. But for the church located in a mixed or nonwhite community where the opportunity of integration is immediate and a "threat" is felt by some, such "preparation" would quite possibly be disastrous, putting, as it does, insecure people on the defensive.

In any case, when educational efforts to impart information are carried on in the traditional sense of the word, they will be much more effective if done incidentally, as a natural part of the everyday program.

Q. But what about preaching on "race relations"?

A. Again its value depends upon how it is done and the situation in which it takes place. We have no way of accurately estimating the power of an appeal to the great ethical imperatives of our faith, or of the transforming nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We do know that exhortation strengthens the sentiments of those who lean toward the right in the first place. But there is also strong evidence that such appeals deepen the sense of guilt which strongly prejudiced persons already feel, and may even increase the frustration and hostility which their prejudice expresses.

In addition, sermons on "brotherhood" can all too easily play the role of a sop thrown to the conscience, of both the preacher and the congregation. That is, they may be harmless substitutes in words for what appears (quite falsely) to be the more dangerous creative action.

Sermons might be considered as only one of many forms of action, all of which should complement each other. And it is undoubtedly true that the most effective sermons for building interracial good will are those in which "racial" material is used illustratively and incidentally, rather than as a kind of direct assault on the prejudiced.

Q. Does the amount of time available for "preparation" have anything to do with its effectiveness? What about those churches whose only alternatives are to move, to stay and die, or to stay and become interracial? Some of them haven't much time for education.

A. The point is that "education" in such a situation probably won't improve attitudes, unless it is the "education" of actual inclusiveness. To quote again the findings of the 1950 survey, "Time and opportunity for the preparation of Christians for a widening Christian fellowship in their churches to include persons of nonwhite skin color is not necessarily related to the degree of ease with which the change comes about. . . . Forthright movement directly toward the goal of 'open' fellowship in the local church has avoided much of the indecision and friction that has been found to develop often during long-range programs of re-education." (*Interracial News Service*, November-December, 1954.)

From a study on integration in the public schools, which has indirect implications for the churches, an analysis showed that "whenever the responsible officials seemed . . . indecisive . . . or willing to temporize and postpone clear and definite action . . . there was increased resistance to, and problems associated with, desegregation." (Kenneth B. Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 343.)

As to the church that sees itself in a "desperate" situation, the very cruciality of its situation, if clearly understood by its leaders, may well be an asset. When the only alternatives to integration are seen to in-

volve the loss of a loved place of worship, or a compromise with Christian ideals, or the imposition of a heavy financial burden, or some other important disadvantage, a strong force toward inclusiveness already resides in that church. It might well be wise, however, to point to these unpleasant alternatives privately and informally rather than in a formal meeting.

Q. What about the church for which there is no immediate prospect of inclusiveness by virtue of its location in a segregated community? Could direct, re-educational devices such as study groups, panels, lectures, etc., be used there?

A. Yes, but educational efforts to increase racial good will will probably be more effective with small, informal groups than with either large groups or individuals. Christians need to remember what has been a well-established principle for some time now—that it is usually easier to effect growth and change of attitude in a group than in an isolated individual; although with some troubled individuals, personal counseling is certainly necessary. Giving lectures and handing out printed information, when done by themselves, can be regarded generally as an almost complete waste of time and money except as they clarify and strengthen the beliefs of the already convinced.

Further, as discussion of "the issue" comes up normally and naturally within small groups, the chance that prejudices will be eased is greater if an atmosphere prevails which will encourage free expression of feelings, however hostile they may be, i.e., the participants do not feel that they will be judged and attacked for their opinions by the "enlightened" leaders.

Q. Could not articulate, opinionated persons disrupt a whole church whose practice they abhorred?

A. Possibly, and sometimes they do just that on other issues besides open fellowship. But, to be practical, such persons might well be regarded as needing the personal counseling of the pastor. Further, they should not be pushed into positions of formal leadership. Sometimes they can be kept busy on other, less crucial matters.

In any case, pastors of integrated churches unanimously found that the overwhelming majority of their congregation did not actively oppose open fellowship once it had become an actual fact (however violently some of them might have spoken against it if it had been publicly proposed ahead of time). The vast majority of the average Protestant congregation, if given firm, decisive, and intelligent leadership by persons they respect, will not be "captured" by a vocal minority who go against the dictates of the Christian faith as seen by the average Christian.

Q. Suppose a "showdown" should come?

A. Again, pastors are agreed that showdowns, which they tended to fear above all else, almost never materialized. It should be noted, however, that many of those who have expressed themselves privately acknowledged that they were careful not to put persons in a position that would force them to make a showdown necessary in order to save their face. Some said they were prepared, in the event such a thing did happen, to resign their pastorates rather than compromise their convictions.

Q. Does this seem to imply that a vote on an "official policy" for a church or session might not be wise?

A. There certainly are situations in which such an "official policy" or formal vote would appear to be very unwise. It could well crystallize and solidify the opposition. Other less urgent situations suggest that such an action might be helpful. Many pastors of integrated churches did not secure formal approval either from session or congregation before action was taken. One said that in the beginning such official approval might have been refused, and later on, though it would have been given, it was unnecessary. Some pastors feel there are moral questions about getting an official justification for what they believe the Church should do as a part of its evangelism.

Q. Assuming that a session did "go on record," what would it accomplish?

A. In all likelihood, nothing, so far as that church's ever becoming an integrated (or even inclusive) fellowship is concerned, unless sincere effort is made by the pastor and others to bring all residents of the parish into the Church's fellowship. Such a formal resolution could easily become a substitute for action, inducing complacency, and actually precluding the possibility of an inclusive church. At this stage in our society, resolutions mean very little to minority persons. It is extremely doubtful if any Negro, for example, would ever seek membership in that church simply on the basis of such a resolution. Evangelism by resolution is not an effective way of obtaining white members either. In most churches, new members must be *sought*, regardless of their color.

Q. Aren't there radical differences between North and South which would render much of what has been said here irrelevant south of the Mason-Dixon line?

A. It is possible—some would say probable. As in the North, so in the South particular situations vary considerably from place to place.

However, the 1950 survey showed that 110 out of 1,331 racially inclusive churches (in three denominations) were located in the Southeast. A release by Religious News Service dated April 26, 1954, stated

that the (white) Oak Grove Baptist Church in Paragould, Arkansas, a farming community, recently received ten Negroes into its membership.

Dr. Kenneth B. Clarke, in his study of desegregation in the public schools, has said, "The conditions which lead to successful desegregation seem to be as effective when used in the South as they are in other regions of the country" (*op. cit.*, p. 346).

No clear-cut answer seems possible to this question now. Certainly courage, intelligence, tact, and love would seem to be even more necessary to the Southern leader who attempts to bring his church into free fellowship with all Christians than it would to such a Northern leader.

Q. Desegregation in the public schools has been cited again and again here. Can this experience really be transferred to a local church?

A. All local church situations are unique (ask any pastor). But there are certainly parallel principles in the field of public education that can be helpful as guides to local church leaders. For example, consider the following conditions set down by Dr. Clarke (*op. cit.*, p. 346) for "the accomplishment of efficient desegregation with a minimum of social disturbance":

1. "A clear and unequivocal statement of policy by leaders with prestige." For the church, this might well mean "the quiet, unassuming, and persistent suggestion of firm conviction by the pastor and session members, as individuals."

2. "Firm enforcement of the changed policy by authorities and persistence in the execution of this policy in the face of initial resistance." For the church, "calm and consistent action by those leaders who believe in a nonsegregated church as though their action was normal and natural, which it ought to be."

3. "Appeal to individuals concerned in terms of their religious principles of brotherhood and their acceptance of the American traditions of fair play and justice." For the church, "repeated indirect affirmations by the leaders of the basic Christian rightness of what is being done."

Q. How, in a word, does one help a church become a free and open fellowship?

A. Simply make the same effort to bring all residents of the church's parish into the church as has frequently been limited in the past to bringing in only the same racial group as the church's membership. The only way to desegregate a church is to desegregate it.

Q. What should be the context and the underlying motive in such action?

A. Christian evangelism and love for people—all people.

How to Proceed

". . . no intelligent efforts have failed"

Every congregation has a unique history and is in a situation that has unique characteristics. Therefore, the precise manner in which any particular church can become other than monoracial in its work and worship will be different from that of any other church. It is even conceivable, though not likely, that a particular congregation with apparent opportunity and challenge to become racially inclusive may possess certain factors in its tradition, leadership, or general make-up which make desegregation, if not impossible, at least highly improbable and difficult.

However, on the assumption that such a church is, in the light of what is now known from experience, exceedingly rare, the following suggestions on "how to proceed" toward free and open fellowship are lifted up. They are not intended to define, but rather to stimulate, creative planning and action.

Prerequisites for Integration

In the Community—Of course, the first precondition for an integrated church is the presence of residents of another racial or cultural group who are susceptible to Christian evangelism in the church's geographical community. It would be not only a misunderstanding of the Church's mission, but also artificial and potentially explosive, to "import" minority persons from outside a church's area of service merely in order to claim the distinction of being "interracial." It must also be recognized that a predominantly Jewish or Roman Catholic community does not, numerically speaking, present fruitful ground for Protestant evangelism. On the other hand, the belief that certain racial and/or ethnic groups because they are not "our kind," should be disregarded is not defensible either factually or morally. For example, it is a mistake to assume that all Puerto Ricans are Roman Catholics, that Negroes are "happier by themselves" or "wouldn't care for our kind of service," and that American Indians are "culturally unassimilable." The first condition for integration is resident evangelizable minority persons.

In the Pastor—Rarely will a congregation move toward desegregation unless its pastor has prior convictions and takes the initiative. His is the key role. He cannot do the job by himself, but unless he is committed to it, it probably will not get done. Many pastors of integrated

churches testify that they were moved, first, by their basic conviction that segregation (particularly in the church) is wrong; and, secondly, by a deep, inner decision in their own hearts that committed them to the positive goal of an integrated church.

Assuming such conviction and decision, a normal amount of intelligence, tact, friendliness, and Christian sensitivity toward other people should provide the initial personality traits needed by the average pastor. In addition, he should provide himself with knowledge, gained both from print and from associations across racial and cultural lines. He should cultivate the ability, if he does not already have it, to be at ease with all people, not merely those of his "own" race, class, and culture.

He should prepare himself, both intellectually and temperamentally, to understand how people's prejudices work, what causes them, how they may be eased. Above all, he should scrupulously avoid moralizing and bearing judgment upon those whose perspective is different from his own. He must learn, if he hasn't already, how to love the prejudiced person with compassion. It is God who judges, not men.

The most vulnerable spot for the pastor who would lead his congregation into full and open fellowship is the way in which he goes about the normal tasks of his ministry—ministering to the sick, pastoral counseling, the meeting of human needs, preaching. Being on the side of the angels in his race attitudes does not excuse him from doing a good job in his total ministry. In fact, it might make it all the more necessary for him to see that his pastoral work is above reproach.

Sometimes the pastor of a church that is in the process of becoming integrated feels even more intensely than the average pastor that peculiar loneliness which some find in the ministry itself. Two things may help him. One is the friendship and counsel of fellow ministers who share his conviction. The other is a frequent reminder of Woodrow Wilson's words, "It is better to fail in a cause that will ultimately succeed than to succeed in a cause that will ultimately fail."

But let him avoid at all costs either a martyr or a messiah complex. At this writing no intelligent efforts to desegregate a local church are known to have failed.

In the Congregation—A reasonable amount of trust and affection on the part of a congregation for its pastor would seem necessary. Certainly it would be foolhardy to pour oil on an already kindled, or generally smoldering, fire. A minister whose relationship with his people, particularly his official boards, is already strained might well direct his energies toward building

good will among his own people. At the same time, however, many pastors have led their churches into inclusive fellowship within a few months after assuming their pastorate. The length of tenure of a pastor is apparently not in itself an indication of his people's trust and affection.

It is a mistake to assume that a majority of the congregation, or even of the session, must be in favor of, or quiescent toward, desegregation before it can be attempted. In every instance but one, integrated church pastors who were asked how many laymen they could count on for positive help and co-operation in the beginning replied, "From one to four." As inclusiveness increased, this small initial "cell of the concerned" grew in numbers and effectiveness. Laymen who, for other reasons, have low "status" or are "unpopular" with the congregation are probably not assets for inclusiveness. One of the first things necessary for the pastor to do is to learn who his allies are in the congregation, and informally enlist their counsel and help.

Few congregations possess inherent qualities that deny them the possibility of becoming fully Christian in their practice of racial and cultural inclusiveness.

General Approach

The use of sermons, individual counseling, and other "educational" measures, along with their limitations, are discussed under "People Keep Asking." In the actual movement into inclusiveness, such elements play a subordinate but important and continuing role. The pastor will be wise as a serpent and gentle as a dove as he seeks, by indirection, to interpret to his congregation the significance of what they are doing. Without fanfare or patronizing attitude he will lead them gradually into as full a knowledge of the truth as they are able to bear at any given time.

For example, in one women's circle he might encourage a book review of Wentzel's *Epistle to White Christians*, whereas such a program in another women's group might do more harm than good. In the young people's Sunday evening fellowship a well-chosen minority speaker might describe in terms of his own experience what it means to him to belong to a minority group, whereas some other evening group could well misinterpret such a discussion. In all the continuing process of education the pastor's knowledge of his people, conditioned by a sense of urgency, will guide him as he seeks ever to lead them farther and farther into freedom. He will overlook no opportunity and no resource, but he will not bulldoze or browbeat. Needless to say, his sermons will be Biblical and relevant, but rarely, if ever, specifically addressed to the issue of "race relations." How spe-

cifically and fully he expresses himself in any particular situation will depend upon the nature of that situation. Like Paul, he may be "all things to all men," but he will never seek to conceal or compromise his convictions.

Specific Approach

There comes a time when continued "education," if it involves only different uses of words, pictures, ideas, etc., can actually become a substitute for inclusive membership, and a hindrance to it. Sooner or later, preferably sooner, the church that has the opportunity must reach out and bring into its pews and programs the minority persons who live nearby, or else be content to remain segregated. With rare exceptions, colored people will not present themselves for attendance or membership in a white church unless they are extended individual, personal, and sincere invitations, and sometimes, as in the case of many white persons, not even then. There is no need to go into reasons for this reticence. Needless to say, it is not due to any inherent racial characteristics, but to previous restrictions all too common in our churches and society.

As suggested above, the minister should early single out for individual help and counsel those people (probably few at first) in his congregation whose co-operation he can count on. With their assistance he and they will visit in the homes of nearby residents, regardless of their color, and extend a sincere invitation to worship. Visitors should not be surprised by the restrained politeness they may encounter during the first few visits in the homes of some minority families.

Many churches with facilities for weekday craft, athletics, and other community-centered programs will find that the use of these facilities will be welcomed by the people, particularly the youth, of the parish who may not be church members. The minister should be aware of the various organized community groups through which approaches can be made—boys' clubs, scout troops, neighborhood councils, citizens committees, P.T.A.'s, Y.M.C.A.'s and Y.W.C.A.'s, etc. A police precinct station, or other official local agency, can frequently supply this information if it is not known.

Some hazards are attached to the "community service" or "neighborhood house" approach. One is that church people may see the church's role in the community solely as that of a benevolent society, extending its privileges to the "underprivileged." Results of such a concept may be the creation of a cleavage between the basic function of the church, which is to be a working and worshiping fellowship, and its incidental functions of providing various benefits to its community.

The growth of a segregated minority program or unit within the church building, but external to the church's fellowship, is more than a distinct possibility.

Four pastors of integrated churches in New York agreed unanimously that attempts to integrate a church by beginning at the fringe of its program and working inward are more difficult, more hazardous, and take longer than attempts that begin at the core of the church's life—its worship and its fellowship—and work outward into its program.

In many communities involved in racial change, panic and insecurity among the older residents is high. Sometimes talk of violence ensues. It is relatively common for protective or homeowners associations to be formed for the purpose of keeping newcomers out. Since what happens in the community affects the church and what happens in the church affects the community such movements and sentiments are important. The church can be a stabilizing force if its leadership is wisely exerted.

In the Germantown section of Philadelphia where panic selling was the order of the day, one Christian family got their neighbors, white and colored, together. They set up a neighborhood council, devoted to keeping standards of residence high, irrespective of race. They had signs printed which read "This House Not for Sale. We Like It Here," and posted them in their windows. Christian leaders have engaged in similar effective community organization in other tension areas.

Studies that have been made of the effects of nonwhite purchases on real estate values which go a long way toward laying dead some of the commonly held fears on this score are now available. (See Bibliography.)

As early as possible, visible witness that a church is essentially and really committed to inclusiveness should be given, even beyond the presence of minority people in the congregation or program. One pastor, acting on his own authority, inserted in the weekly church bulletin the statement that all who sought the fellowship of the church were welcome, regardless of their race or national origin. Another posted a similar welcome on the church's bulletin board. Still another had it stated in the weekly advertisement of the church on the religious page of the local newspaper.

Qualified persons of all races present in the church should, at an early date, be represented in positions of high visibility such as choir members, greeters, ushers, etc. Of course, the sooner responsible policy-making positions such as session membership, officership, and teachers are available the better.

Staff persons in positions of visibility, such as organist, choir director, parish worker, director of Christian education, minister or associate minister, probably do more to witness to a church's policy and practice than anything else. No church in the process of integration can do all these things, but at some point one or more of them becomes possible, and should be practiced.

The Larger Strategy

Much has already been done and is being done by the General Assembly and in the Boards and Agencies of the Church to bring about a nonsegregated church in a nonsegregated society. But to the local church pastor actually engaged in the process of inclusiveness, these actions sometimes seem, though helpful, yet remote from his very real situation.

For this reason, the moral support of his brethren nearby means much to him. This support can be both informal in terms of friendship and understanding, and formal in terms of presbytery action which upholds his hands.

Not only are presbytery resolutions commending all action which builds Christian brotherhood and urging all churches to practice open fellowship helpful, but the whole strategy of a presbytery (or synod) can bear witness to Christian principles in racial and cultural relations.

Some presbyteries already have strategy committees which see and plan the church's extension program not only in terms of building new churches but also of conserving the old, so long as people live in their parishes. The tendency to flee to the suburbs on the part of the churches can be lessened by wise counsel, planning and support at the presbytery and local church level.

The Church's missionary task should take its ministry wherever people live, including the inner city. The need for "new" churches (perhaps in old, abandoned buildings) which start out with a biracial staff of ministers and enfold from their very inception the heterogeneous peoples at their doorstep is not being met to any degree. Certainly here is one of the new missionary frontiers of our day.

The practice of a presbytery or synod in its leadership training and summer conference programs is another area in which opportunity and need for color-blind operation are apparent. Qualified minority persons on the faculty or counseling staff accomplish a dual purpose—the easing of a perennial shortage of leadership and the providing of invaluable interracial experience and witness for Christians of all ages.

The local church is the "front line" of advance against the citadel of segregation. But the whole Church shares the responsibility and urgency for the task.

By What Power?

"the gospel . . . the power of God to everyone who believes"

By FRANK T. WILSON, *Dean, School of Religion, Howard University, Washington, D. C.*

INTEGRATION in the church is the threshold to community—indivisible and unrestricted.

The process of integration is reciprocal and multilateral. It cannot be otherwise. In the church this is more profoundly true than in the fields of sports, government, industrial employment, and the theater. Movements toward desegregation in various spheres of our national life have awaited the impact of political legislation, executive orders, and court rulings. Less frequently there has been institutional response to the outraged consciences of persons of the "in group," and occasionally there are drastic reversals of exclusive practices as manifestations of enlightened self-interest in face of substantial public protest against insufferable bigotry.

When walls of separation begin to tumble by force of the aroused public conscience, or when they are demolished by the persistent battering of determined minorities, the supreme task of laying the foundations of genuine community still remains. This is a more delicately poised engagement than that of destroying the outer forms of the old iniquity. It requires finer sensitivity, deeper commitment, and greater imagination. In this phase of establishing integration there are no measured considerations of historic prerogatives, privileges, and rights. Rather, efforts are directed toward discovering the conditions and the immediate means for translating into structural and functional terms our actual unity as children of God and members of the body of Christ. This means that the church, any church Negro or white, demonstrates its basic apostasy when it stops short in deliberating upon the desirability or wisdom of becoming a vehicle for the full and unsegregated experience of the love of God in association with varicolored members of the household of faith.

There is a strangely consistent logic in the caution and resistance with which many Christians reflect upon the implications of "a nonsegregated church and a nonsegregated society." To experience the love of God in communion with

one's fellow human beings is an all-pervading, all-possessing, and all-directing encounter. No aspect of life is exempt, no department of existence is immune, no area of behavior is reserved. The church is uniquely the place where God meets his people and shares with them the heights and depths of his truth, goodness, and love. Here, by the working of the Holy Spirit, he leads persons of all ages and conditions into an understanding of their identification, one with another, in all matters pertaining to life and death in this world and in the world to come.

Churches and churchmen are hard-pressed to avoid condemnation for the anomalous position in which they find themselves in reference to racial policies and practices. We are properly penitent in remembering the ethical blindness and "social lag" which allowed forces of religion to be so far behind so-called "secular forces" in giving effect to an ideal that stands at the center of the Christian conception of the worth of man and the primacy of love in human relationships. The "symbol of God's presence" cannot longer suffer the embarrassment nor survive the reproach heaped upon it in consequence of the discrepancy between its judgment upon the world and its witness before the world.

Whatever long-standing ecclesiastical, cultural, sociological, or political factors may account for this separation among and within churches on grounds of race and color, all parties to this blasphemy, white and Negro alike, will continue to render disservice to all that is fundamental in our faith, so long as we rationalize or attempt to defend our disinclination to move away from the segregated pattern of church membership and church organization. This will require a willingness to abandon some arrangements that have become seductively comfortable and convenient over the long stretch of years. It will involve relinquishment of the racial church as a vested interest. Many alterations in status may indicate a loss of much cherished power. May it not be that here is a modern dramatization of the eternal truth that "to lose one's life is to find it"?

There is a touch of pathos in the defensiveness with which many Negro churchmen cling to the Negro church as the only guarantee of freedom in religious experience and unlimited responsibility in religious leadership. Likewise, there is a tragic note in the assertions of white churchmen that there is no contradiction between enthusiasm for the world mission of the Church and cold resistance to a racially inclusive church at home. Furthermore, there is irony in the fact that any church denies in direct action within its own life that which it proclaims be-

fore the world as the essence of its faith—"the gospel of Christ, the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." If this is our faith, there is nothing more natural and normal than churches open for full participation in the fellowship of believers.

Fear, anxiety, and apprehensiveness may prevent resolute action in many areas of the common life of a nation. It is precisely the function of religion and the role of the Church to mediate a spirit of confidence and trust sufficient to dispel the suspicion that Negroes cannot expect the full experience of participation, communion, and leadership in a nonsegregated church, and a spirit of mutual respect sufficient to assure white Christians that to become one in the body of Christ does not represent invasion of the haven of the spiritually elite by "lesser breeds without the Law."

In this matter, such questions as "How much?" "How many?" and "How far?" are sadly inappropriate. Our real questions must be: "By what power?" and "In what additional ways?" It is the whole Church responding to the total claim of Christ upon our entire life. Integration is the threshold to community; community is the necessary condition of the household of God.

General Assembly Pronouncement

We commend our Church for its continued efforts to make the law of Christ relative to all areas of the Church's life. We particularly commend the increasing number of local churches which have become racially and/or culturally integrated and have learned the joy of full Christian fellowship.

The Supreme Court's decision, when considered with the repeated pronouncements of our General Assembly, as contrasted with the practices of our Church at many points, makes it imperative that we now make these pronouncements effective.

It has been too frequently the practice of churches caught in the population movements that change the racial or cultural characteristics of the area to seek more "desirable" locations in order to escape their Christian responsibility toward their community. It becomes ever more clear that sessions, ministers and church members should make it their Christian concern to communicate the claim of Christ to every person within reach of their church.

Local churches should do more than merely announce to the community a policy of open membership regardless of racial or cultural background. A mere statement by the session of a church may all too easily lead only to complacency and self-satisfaction.

Our churches will be fulfilling their duty to evangelize all people only when they sincerely and personally offer church membership to all persons living within the communities served by them. We call upon all Christians to *work* for, not *wait* for, a Church and a society which rise above racial restrictions. —*General Assembly, May, 1954.*

Bibliography

Books, pamphlets, films, and other materials in the whole field of intergroup relations are legion. This list is kept brief in the hope that a few select materials will be useful to a busy pastor, and with the knowledge that a fuller bibliography can be found in *Everyone Welcome*. Another list of *Readings in Intergroup Relations* can be obtained for 25 cents from the National Conference of Christians and Jews, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. Films are available from many of the agencies listed in *Everyone Welcome* and from some metropolitan public libraries.

Real Estate Values

Values in Transition Areas: Some New Concepts, by Belden Morgan, an appraiser. Society of Residential Appraisers, 221 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago 1, Ill.

If Your Next Neighbors Are Negroes. Congregational Christian Board of Home Missions, Fisk University Offices, Nashville 8, Tenn. 25 cents.

Prejudice and the Light Touch

Vegetables and People. Department of Social Education and Action, 830 Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia 7, Pa. 75 cents for 25 copies.

Other Pamphlets

Integration, by Margaret C. McCullough. Race Relations Department, Congregational Christian Board of Home Missions, Fisk University Offices, Nashville 8, Tenn. 60 cents.

What Is Race? A UNESCO publication. International Documents Service, Columbia University Press, 2960 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y. $1.00.

Periodicals

Interracial News Service. Bimonthly. Department of Racial and Cultural Relations, National Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. $2.00 for two years.

The Interracial Review. Roman Catholic monthly. 20 Vesey Street, New York 7, N. Y. $1.00 per year.

The Crisis. Monthly. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 20 West 40th Street, New York 18, N. Y. $1.50 per year.

The "Classic"

An American Dilemma, by Gunnar Myrdal. Harper & Brothers, 1944. (This book can probably be secured at your local public library.)

Integrated Presbyterian Churches

The churches below constitute only a partial list of thoroughly integrated Presbyterian congregations. Many others exist which are not cited here.

Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, *Clarence E. Boyer, Minister*
737 East 6th Street, New York 9, N. Y.

West Cincinnati-St. Barnabas Church, *Maurice F. McCrackin, Minister*
916 Poplar St., Cincinnati 14, Ohio

Calvary Presbyterian Church, *John Bruere, Minister*
2020 East 79th St., Cleveland 3, Ohio

Morrisania Presbyterian Church, *Robert J. Stone, Minister*
Washington Ave. and 168th St., New York 56, N. Y.

Bidwell Street Presbyterian Church, *Virgil P. Moccia, Minister*
Bidwell and Liverpool St., Pittsburgh 12, Pa.

Fort Schuyler Presbyterian Church, *Howard M. Weaving, Minister*
177th St. and Dewey Ave., New York 61, N. Y.

Westminster Presbyterian Church, *Wesley L. Hawes, Minister*
240 Webster Ave., San Francisco 17, Calif.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, *Malcolm B. Sylvester, Minister*
12725 12th Street, Detroit 6, Mich.

First Presbyterian Church, *Melvin J. Joachim, Minister*
E. Lincoln and N. Columbus Ave., Mount Vernon, N. Y.

Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, *Richard C. Snyder, Minister*
S. Wells and 52d St., Chicago 19, Ill.

Central Presbyterian Church, *Herbert H. Hugo, Minister*
Sacramento Blvd. and Warren, Chicago 12, Ill.